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► **To cite this version:**

Corinne Lefèvre. In the Name of the Fathers: Mughal Genealogical Strategies from Bābur to Shāh Jahān. Religions of South Asia, 2011, 5 (1-2), pp.409-442. 10.1558/rosa.v5i1/2.409 . hal-00704315

**HAL Id: hal-00704315**

**<https://hal.science/hal-00704315>**

Submitted on 13 Jan 2020

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# In the Name of the Fathers: Mughal Genealogical Strategies from Bābur to Shāh Jahān

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**ABSTRACT:** Genealogy has always been a kingly preoccupation, especially in the Indic world where *ḷṣatriya* status (whether genuine or fabricated) was a *sine qua non* for the exercise of legitimate power. It was no less true of the Turco-Mongol dynasty known as 'Mughal' which came to dominate vast expanses of the subcontinent from the sixteenth century onwards. True, the Mughals could boast of such illustrious ancestors as the world-conquerors Chingīz Khān and Tīmūr. Yet, from the moment they set foot in India, they became aware of the limited legitimacy they would be able to derive from such genealogical credentials in a region where neither Chingīz Khān and his successors nor Tīmūr had left very good memories. On the other hand, their descent from such famous figures constituted a real asset *vis-à-vis* their Ottoman, Safavid and Uzbek competitors and among the Turco-Mongol and Iranian elements of their nobility. The fact that the Mughals could afford neither to alienate their Indian subjects nor to dispense with the international prestige they derived from their lineage explains to a large extent the fluctuating genealogical strategies they adopted during the first century or so of their dominance.

**KEYWORDS:** Chingīz Khān; dynastic genealogy; iconography; legitimacy; Mughal empire; Tīmūr.

## INTRODUCTION: TURCO-MONGOL PRECEDENTS

The decades following the death of Tīmūr—one of the Mughals' most prestigious ancestors—witnessed an incredible efflorescence of materials entirely or partly devoted to tracing the origins of the world-conqueror and commissioned by his sons and grandsons (Table 1).

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Table 1. Early Tīmūrid genealogical works and their patrons (Woods 1987, 1990; Szuppe 2004: 356–59).

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Genealogies (*nasab nāmas*)

- (1) Untitled Turco-Mongol genealogy, by Ḥusain bin ‘Alī Shāh, c. 1405–1409, dedicated to Khalīl Sulṭān (1384–1411), Tīmūr’s grandson by his third son Mīrān Shāh (d. 1408)
- (2) Untitled Tīmūrid genealogy, by Mu‘īn-ud-dīn Naṭanzī (?), dedicated to Iskandar (1384–1415), Tīmūr’s grandson by his second son ‘Umar Shaikh (d. 1394)
- (3) *Mu‘izz-ul-ansāb (Glorifier of Genealogies)*, 1426–27, dedicated to Shāhrukh (1377–1447), Tīmūr’s fourth son
- (4) *Ulūs-i arbā‘-i chingīzī (The Four Chingīzid Nations)*, written or commissioned by Ulugh Beg (1394–1449), Tīmūr’s grandson by his fourth son Shāhrukh
- (5) *Shajarat-ul-atrāk (Genealogy of the Turks)*, an abridgement and adaptation of the preceding (first half of the fifteenth century?)
- (6) *Fuṣūl-us-sulṭāniyya fī uṣūl-i insāniyya (Kingly Seasons and the Origins of Humanity)*, dedicated to Ibrāhīm Sulṭān (1394–1435), Tīmūr’s grandson by his fourth son Shāhrukh

Detailed genealogical sections included in world or dynastic histories

- (7) ‘Iskandar Anonymous’, by Mu‘īn-ud-dīn Naṭanzī, c. 1413–14, a world history dedicated to Iskandar
- (8) *Muntakhab-ut-tawārīkh-i mu‘īnī (Choice of Helpful Histories)*, by Mu‘īn-ud-dīn Naṭanzī, 1414, a revised and edited version of the preceding, dedicated to Shāhrukh
- (9) *Żafar Nāma (Book of Victory)*, by Sharaf-ud-dīn ‘Alī Yazdī (d. 1454), 1427–28, an official Persian biography of Tīmūr dedicated to Ibrāhīm Sulṭān
- (10) *Zubdat-ut-tawārīkh-i bāysunghurī (The Best of Bāysunghur’s Histories)*, a Tīmūrid history included in a world history dedicated to Bāysunghur (1399/1400–1433), Tīmūr’s grandson by his fourth son Shāhrukh

Genealogical inscriptions

- (11) Two genealogical inscriptions of the Gur-i Amir (Tīmūr’s mausoleum at Samarqand), commissioned after 1425 by Ulugh Beg

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These ranged from purely genealogical works focusing on the Mongol and the Bārlās houses (Bārlās being the name of Tīmūr’s tribe) to detailed genealogical sections inserted within texts of a broader scope such as world or dynastic histories,<sup>2</sup> and also included a couple of inscriptions engraved on Tīmūr’s tombstone and cenotaph in Samarqand. The authors of this corpus drew their inspiration from earlier Mongol traditions, which were themselves heavily indebted to the Turkic, and more particularly Uyghur, practice of genealogical and dynastic recording (Esin 1989: 113; Aigle 2000: 154–56). The works of Rashīd-ud-dīn (d. 1318)—the well-known historiographer of

2. Among the latter, the *Żafar Nāma* by Sharaf-ud-dīn ‘Alī Yazdī, an official Persian history of Tīmūr completed twenty years after his death, met with the greatest success and proved to be the most influential in subsequent centuries.

the Mongol Īlkhānids in Iran (1256–1353)—constituted an important milestone in the transmission of those genealogical traditions to later Turco-Mongol dynasties such as the Tīmūrīds. The first part of Rashīd-ud-dīn's *Jamī-ut-tawārīkh* (*Compendium of Chronicles*) actually included an account of the ethnogenesis of the Mongol and Turkic tribes, while its third part—also known as *Shu'ab-i panjgāna* (*Genealogy of the Five Peoples*)—provided a detailed presentation of the origins of the Arabs, Jews, Franks, Chinese and Mongols (Quinn 1989). Maḥmūd Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) the chronicler's patron having converted to Islam on his accession to power, the Mongols' account of their origins was here recast in a general Islamic chronological framework according to which the story of humanity started with the first man, Adam. In addition to textual genealogical narratives and lists, many of the early Turkic and Mongol materials included graphic representations of dynastic lineages, generally in the form of family trees sometimes adorned with illustrations. One of the first Muslim adaptations of such a tradition may be found in Rashīd-ud-dīn's *Shu'ab-i panjgāna*, where, however, the diagram lacks illustrations (Roxburgh 2005: 216, 417–18). A similar graphical arrangement is visible in some of the aforementioned early Tīmūrīd genealogies, such as the Turco-Mongol genealogy made for Khalīl Sulṭān in the first decade of the fifteenth century, or the slightly later *Mu'izz-ul-ansāb*. The latter seems moreover to have become a reference work for the dynasty, since it was regularly updated, ending with the last Tīmūrīd sultans of Herat, Ḥusain Bayqarā (r. 1469–1506) and his son Badī'-uz-zamān (d. 1514) (Roxburgh 2005: 418).

The data provided by these materials is summarized in Figure 1a. As indicated above, everything started with Adam, and continued through Japheth, one of Noah's sons who was also the progenitor of Turk, the eponymous ancestor of the Turkic people.<sup>3</sup> With him a shift was thus made from biblical patriarchs to the first Turco-Mongol figure, while another important split occurred in the thirty-first generation. At this time, the princess Ālanqū'ā (a Persianized form of 'Alankua [Kurkluk]', meaning an immaculate woman), who had recently lost her husband, got involved in a series of rather strange events. According to Mongol and early Tīmūrīd sources, she was visited at night by a ray of light that took hold of her and, on leaving in the morning, assumed the form of a wolf or a yellow dog. After some time, Ālanqū'ā gave birth to three sons better known as the *nāirun*, or the children of light, who were nothing less than the first Mongols. In other words, what we have here is a retelling of the Mongol myth of origins, which was first set down in writing in the *Secret History of the Mongols* (c. 1228) but was ultimately derived from earlier Turkic mythology (Aigle 2000: 154–58).

3. On this 'Mosaic ethnology' (i.e. the concept that all existing races could be traced back to one of Noah's three sons), see Trautmann 1997: 28–61.



Kacholi [Qāchulay] dreamed he saw three stars rise on the left of [his twin brother] Kubul Khan [Qabul Khān]... [Then] a fourth star of great magnitude, and very bright, arose from the neck of Kubul Khan... [Qāchulay then woke up, but quickly went back to sleep.] [He] again dreamed that seven stars rose from his neck successively, and that an eighth arose, of very large size and great refulgence.

(trans. Miles 1838: 55–56)

The next morning, the court astrologers interpreted the first vision as foretelling the rise to prominence of Qabul Khān's offspring, that was to culminate with his great-great-grandson, the world-conqueror Chingīz Khān. As to the second dream, it signalled the appearance, in the eighth generation, of a no less exceptional descendant of Qāchulay: the man better known to history as Tīmūr. Thereupon Tumanay Khān conferred sovereignty on Qabul Khān, while Qāchulay assumed real (military and administrative) power (Miles 1838: 57–58).

According to early Tīmūrid genealogists, this 'covenant of dual kingship' (Woods 1990: 91) was dutifully respected by both sides until a few years after Tīmūr's birth, when the Ögedayid 'Alī Sulṭān<sup>4</sup> took control of the Chaghatāyid khanate and overthrew its legitimate monarch (1340). Though the agreement became henceforth null and void, chroniclers insist that Tīmūr nonetheless made a point of ruling in conformity with it (see e.g. Miles 1838: 373, 381). By providing Chingīz Khān and Tīmūr with a common ancestry and depicting the latter's career as a mere continuation of the old compact made between the two houses, Tīmūrid genealogists performed a masterstroke. As rightly noted by John Woods, it was an astute way to 'assert the historical primacy of the Bārlās over their various non-Chingīzid rivals in the Chaghatāyid khanate', and of Tīmūr's clan within the Bārlās tribe (Woods 1990: 102). More importantly, however, the genealogists thereby retrospectively justified the fact that Tīmūr never ruled in his own name but through a series of Chingīzid khans (interestingly all Ögedayid and not Chaghatāyid) who, in reality, were mere figureheads. Whether this fascinating 'prehistory' of the Tīmūrid lineage was ideologically elaborated under Tīmūr himself or under his immediate successors is the object of an ongoing debate that need not detain us here.<sup>5</sup> What is important in the present perspective is that these genealogical traditions were among the dynastic heirlooms the Mughals brought with them when they settled in North India at the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century. How and to what extent they tapped into this reservoir are questions I will address in the next part of this paper, where I will be dealing more generally with the genealogical strategies originally elaborated by the Mughals during the first century or so of their dominance.<sup>6</sup>

4. A descendant of Ögeday (1186–1241), Chingīz Khān's third son.

5. For a summary of the different points of view, see Woods 1990: 97–99; Bernardini 2008: 50–51.

6. For insights into the relatively neglected subject of the revival and reworking of those genealogical traditions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Alam 1980; Balabanlilar 2007: 79, 92–93.

MUGHAL GENEALOGICAL STRATEGIES FROM  
BĀBUR TO SHĀH JAHĀN: A REASSESSMENT

Bābur, the founding father of the Mughal empire, could actually boast of higher genealogical claims than just the ones he had inherited from his Tīmūrid ancestors (Figure 2).

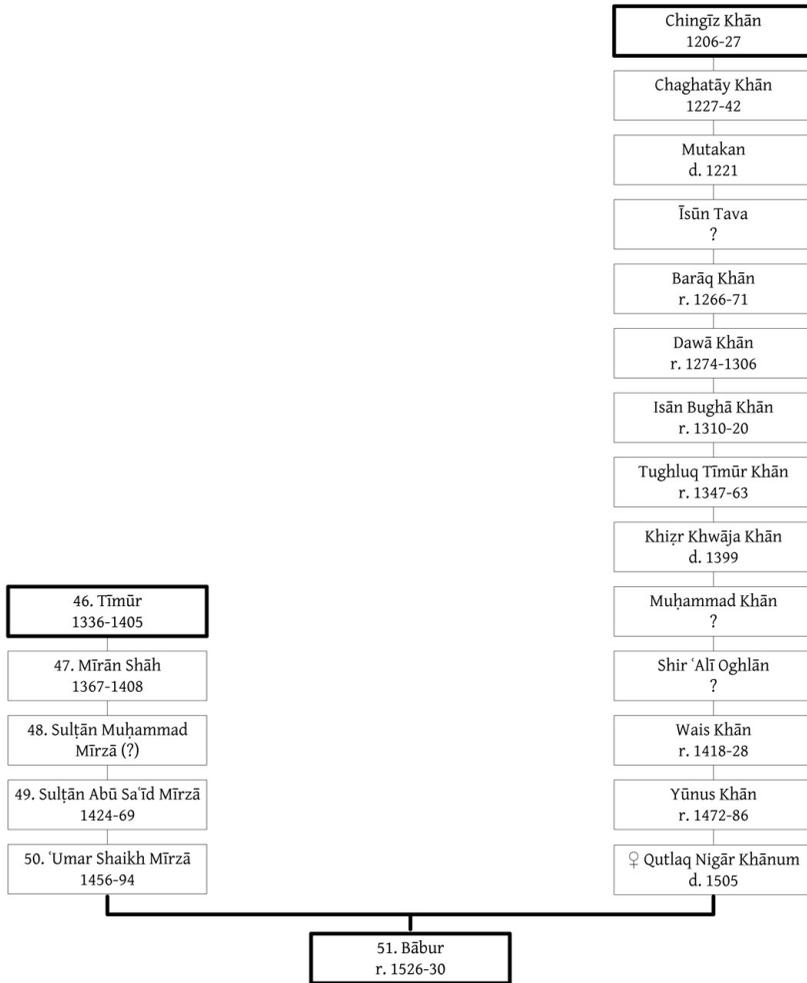


Figure 2. The Mughal's Chingīzid and Tīmūrid lineages.

As he takes care to record in the first pages of his memoirs, Bābur's father 'Umar Shaikh Mīrzā was a great-great-grandson of Tīmūr, while his mother Qutlaq Nigār Khānum was a thirteenth-generation descendant of Chingīz

Khān (Thackston 1996: 40, 43). There was indeed hardly any contemporary Muslim dynast who could avail himself of such a prestigious lineage. And yet, from the moment the Mughals set foot in the subcontinent, they became aware of the limited legitimacy they would be able to derive from such genealogical credentials in the Indian context. For neither Chingīz Khān and his successors nor Tīmūr had left very good memories in India. From the early thirteenth century onwards, the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate took pride in presenting their newly acquired territories as the last sanctuary where Muslims from all over the world could escape Mongol depredations (Kumar 2007, esp. ch. 4). Similarly, the military campaign that Tīmūr led in North India in 1397–99 proved particularly violent even by the standards of the day: his occupation of the city of Delhi resulted in the deaths of dozens of thousands of people (both Hindus and Muslims) and in the deportation of hundreds of craftsmen to Samarqand where—rather ironically—a number of them helped to build the city’s great mosque which was meant to symbolize the recent victory of Islam over infidelity (Bernardini 2008: 112–14).

In order to make up for such a disadvantage, the Mughals resorted to two solutions throughout their reign. The first one consisted in refraining from using their Chingīzid–Tīmūrīd lineage in order to justify their rule in India. The second was the elaboration of legitimacy based on alternative principles that appealed to a wider and possibly all-Indian audience. This brings us to the important question of the different types of audiences addressed by the Mughals’ genealogical strategies. If their descent from Chingīz Khān and Tīmūr represented a liability in the Indian context, it constituted a real asset *vis-à-vis* their Ottoman, Safavid and Uzbek competitors and among the Turco-Mongol and Iranian elements of their nobility. The fact that the Mughals could afford neither to alienate their Indian subjects nor to dispense with the international prestige they derived from their lineage explains to a large extent the middle path they generally followed. However, they did not hesitate to deviate from it in response to increasing internal or external political pressure. Bearing these general guidelines in mind, I will now flesh out these Mughal genealogical strategies, with particular attention to their fluctuations over time, and to the media favoured to convey them.

The Mughals’ discomfort with their Tīmūrīd past may first be traced in the aforementioned memoirs of Bābur. As has been recently demonstrated by Ali Anooshahr, whereas Tīmūr is regularly eulogized in the sections documenting Bābur’s career in Fergana and Kabul, he disappears almost completely in the Indian section where he is moreover superseded as a role model by the *ghāzī* (‘holy warrior’) sultan and Indian conqueror Maḥmūd of Ghazna (r. 997–1030) (Anooshahr 2009: 38–57).<sup>7</sup> In this perspective, Bābur’s statement following his victory at Panipat and his entry into Delhi in 1526 is worth quoting:

7. For an earlier assessment of Tīmūr’s role in the Indian section of the *Bābur Nāma*, see Habib 1997: 299–300.

From the time of the Apostle until this date only three *pādshāhs* [emperors] gained dominion over and ruled the realm of Hindustan. The first was Sultān Maḥmūd Ghaznī...with his sons... The second was Sultān Shihāb-ud-dīn Ghūrī [r. 1173–1206] and his slaves and followers... I am the third. My accomplishment, however, is beyond comparison with theirs.

(trans. Thackston 1996: 329)

Obviously, then, reference to Tīmūr lost a good deal of its usefulness—and hence of its visibility—once the Mughals transferred themselves from Transoxiana to India. Yet they never entirely removed it from their ideological toolbox, even though they were perfectly aware of the problems inherent in its use in the Indian environment. This comes out clearly, for instance, from the Tīmūrid symbol of a lion surmounted by a sun that was introduced by Jahāngīr on the reverse of ceremonial Mughal coins (Figure 3).<sup>8</sup> In a similar spirit, from Bābur's time down to the eighteenth century (with perhaps an interruption under Humāyūn)<sup>9</sup> the inscriptions engraved on the official seal of the dynasty mentioned the names of the ancestors of the reigning monarch up to Tīmūr. At the end of the sixteenth century this genealogical seal was moreover given an orbital and canonical design that would endure until the end of the dynasty (Figure 4). That the Sultans of Aceh (Northern Sumatra) directly modelled their own seal on the Mughal prototype further testifies to its symbolic and legitimacy efficiency, at least for an international audience.<sup>10</sup> But there is a lot more to it than that; although it has long been assumed that the dynasty did get rid of its Turco-Mongol rags after Akbar had provided the empire with new foundations (see e.g. Khan 1972), a careful examination of the Mughals' ideological formulations dating from the 1580s to the 1650s shows that genealogy was regularly re-emphasized in order to enhance the monarchs' legitimacy in general, and to meet more specific challenges.<sup>11</sup>

8. Universal symbols of sovereignty, the lion and the sun were appropriated by a number of Muslim powers, including the Tīmūrids who had them depicted on the walls of their buildings in Samarqand (Hodivala 1923: 162–66). It is therefore highly probable that the figure of the lion surmounted by the sun functioned as some sort of dynastic blazon for the Mughals.

9. Because of the scarcity of historical materials produced during his reign, ascertaining Humāyūn's attitude towards his genealogy remains a difficult task. However, the few hints we have—Abū'l Faḥr mentions that Humāyūn had a *Tīmūr Nāma* (most probably the *Ẓafar Nāma* by Yazdī) in his possession (Beveridge 2000, 1: 309–10), and the *Tārīkh-i Humāyūnī* includes an account of the Mughals down to 1549–50 within the history of Tīmūr and his descendants—point to Humāyūn's self-consciousness as a Tīmūrid. I am grateful to A. Anoošahr for having referred me to the *Tārīkh-i Humāyūnī*, on which see Elliot and Dowson 2001, 4: 213–17.

10. For a detailed analysis of the Mughal orbital genealogical seal and further references concerning its transfer to Aceh in Jahāngīr's time, see Gallop 1999.

11. Aurangzeb's reduction of imperial patronage at the end of the first decade of his reign makes it particularly difficult to assess his views of his own ancestry. While a thorough analysis of the several collections of his letters would certainly shed some light on the question, it represents a daunting task that could not possibly be undertaken here. For a dynastic painting composed at the beginning of his reign, see however Canby 1994: 88–89, 91.



Figure 3. Gold *muhr* of Jahāngīr with his portrait on the obverse and a Tīmūrid symbol on the reverse (1611).

Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London. CM Marsden DCCCXXXVI (BMC 312.IX) AN33595001.



Figure 4. Jahāngīr's orbital seal (Terry 1777: facing p. 346).

As pointed out by Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Muzaffar Alam some two decades ago, the idea that the Mughals had, by the second half of the sixteenth century, definitely distanced themselves from their origins and, by the same token, from the Turco-Mongol political tradition, stems, at least in part, from the undue emphasis given to Akbarid historiography in general and to the *Akbar Nāma* in particular (Subrahmanyam 1992; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2000). One too often forgets that the latter was preceded by a number of other historiographical projects, some of which clearly revolved around the genealogical claims of the Mughals. The earliest of such works is the anonymous *Tārīkh-i Khāndān-i Tīmūriyya* (*History of the Tīmūrid House*) or *Tīmūr Nāma* (*Book of Tīmūr*), where Akbar was presented as a dutiful heir of Tīmūr (Muqtadir 1977: 40–48). Moreover, in the mid-1580s the manuscript was adorned with more than a hundred high-quality illustrations (e.g. Figure 5) which, as the art historian Milo Beach has perceptively underlined, served as templates for the depictions of Akbar included in a contemporary copy of the *Akbar Nāma* (c. 1585) (Beach 2000: 64). That such a project was undertaken during the decade (c. 1575–85) in which Akbar's dominion over India was challenged by his half-brother Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥakīm (d. 1585) is probably no mere coincidence: himself a Tīmūrid, the Mīrzā benefited from the support of many of the Turco-Mongol elements of the Mughal nobility and had succeeded in establishing friendly relations with the Uzbek ruler 'Abdullāh Khān (r. 1583–98).<sup>12</sup> Through its presentation of Akbar as the only legitimate Tīmūrid leader of the day, the *Tīmūr Nāma* should therefore be seen as a part of the ruler's wider effort to rally to his cause those elites who had defected to Muḥammad Ḥakīm.

Another manuscript similarly reflects Akbar's anxiety to promote his descent from prestigious ancestors in reaction to growing political pressure. Completed in 1596 but most probably started earlier, the *Chingīz Nāma* (*Book of Chingīz [Khān]*) was a copy of the sections of Rashīd-ud-dīn's *Jamī'-ut-tawārīkh* dealing with the ancestry and life of the Mongol world-conqueror. Like the *Tīmūr Nāma*, the *Chingīz Nāma* was abundantly illustrated by the artists of the imperial atelier and was equally designed to stress Akbar's connections with a prestigious ancestor. Significantly, one of the paintings depicted Ālanqū'ā with her three 'sons of light'—a rare but, as we shall see, not unique instance signalling the survival of the Mongols' mythical past in Mughal times.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly enough, the work was produced during the same decade in which Akbar transferred his capital seat to Lahore (1585–98). The latter move constituted a military response to 'Abdullāh Khān Uzbek's conquest of Badakhshan in 1584 and to Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥakīm's death the following year—two events that demanded a stronger imperial presence on the border in case of an Uzbek invasion. But there were other available responses as well. In the religious sphere, Subrahmanyam has shown how Akbar's competition with

12. On Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥakīm, see Subrahmanyam 1994; Faruqi 2005.

13. See Pal 1993: 230–31 on this painting; see Marek and Knížková 1963 for reproductions of 34 of the manuscript's 98 illustrations.

the Uzbek ruler forced the former to align himself—at least momentarily—with the Sunni orthodox stance of the latter (Subrahmanyam 1992: 303–307; 2001: 70–73). In a similar vein, one could argue that Akbar’s commissioning of the *Chingīz Nāma* was meant to bring to the fore his own Chingīzid credentials in the face of the superior Chingīzid descent claimed by the Uzbeks.<sup>14</sup>



Figure 5. *The Death of Tīmūr*, from the *Tārīkh-i Khāndān-i Tīmūriyya* or *Tīmūr Nāma* (c. 1585). Courtesy of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. Ms. 551, f. 134a.

Akbar’s interest in and publicizing of his royal genealogy was not, however, limited to his most distant forefathers, but also involved the promotion of closer relatives. Such was for example the case with his grandfather Bābur, whose memoirs he ordered to be translated from the original Chaghatāy Turkish into Persian (1589) and copied in quantity ‘for distribution among the imperial family or leading nobles’ (Beach 2000: 60). In addition, genealogy also impacted upon those historiographical projects that purported to legitimate Akbar’s reign on altogether different bases. In this perspective, Abū’l Faḍl’s famous *Akbar Nāma* (1590–1602) stands as a particularly interesting case study. As is

14. Whereas the Shaibānid Uzbeks were descended from Chingīz Khān’s first son Jūchī (1182–1227), the Mughals’ Chingīzid origins went back to his second son Chaghatāy.

well known, the new ideology expounded there was based on a theory of sovereignty that turned Akbar into an extraordinary being illuminated by divine light or *farr-i izīdī* (Richards 2000). Such a formulation was particularly appropriate because it appealed to concepts already present in both the Muslim and Rājput traditions, because it offered the emperor a long-awaited independence *vis-à-vis* the *‘ulamā*, and, most importantly for the present argument, because its stress on the personal qualities of the monarch made it clear that blood and descent were not enough to legitimate one’s right to rule—thereby neutralizing the claims of Tīmūrid rivals (Alam and Subrahmanyam 2000: 21–22). Yet Abū’l Faḥr was not able, or did not wish, to do away with genealogy altogether in his presentation of Akbar’s divine effulgence. As John Richards has noted with remarkable insight (Richards 2000: 143–50), the latter was actually embedded in an account of the emperor’s ancestors that borrowed extensively from the Mongol myth of origins and its reformulations under the early Tīmūrids. Abū’l Faḥr’s genealogical section takes up the first part of his *Akbar Nāma* almost entirely, but the key to its interpretation is conveniently provided in advance by the chronicler, who was eager to guide his readers on the right path. At the end of the first chapter, devoted to the ‘holy manifestations which took place before His Majesty’s auspicious birth’, Abū’l Faḥr writes:

Though Maulānā Sharaf-ud-dīn ‘Alī Yazdī has in the *Ẓafar Nāma*...explained the eighth shining star that issued from Qāchulī [Qāchulay] Bahādūr’s breast...[as] the appearance of His Majesty the Lord of [the auspicious] Conjunction [*ṣāhib-i qirān*, i.e. Tīmūr] who is the seventh ancestor of His Majesty [Akbar], yet it is clear...that... it is the auspicious Akbar who was the resplendent light which arose from the breast of...[Qāchulay] [i.e. the eighth star].

(trans. Beveridge 2000, 1: 47–48)

To the scholar’s delight, Abū’l Faḥr not only indicates the source for his later genealogical chapters (i.e. the prologue to the fifteenth-century biography of Tīmūr by Yazdī); he also makes the twist he meant to give it very clear. Contrary to the early Tīmūrid version of the prophecy, Abū’l Faḥr has it that the divine light that had originally impregnated Ālanqū’ā—and which is here reinterpreted under the influence of the Eastern or Ishrāqī school of Persian philosophy (Richards 2000: 147)—did not illuminate every one of her descendants but only the most exceptional among them: from Qāchulay, it therefore passed directly on to Tīmūr—whose Indian conquest is incidentally mentioned with studied brevity (Beveridge 2000, 1: 210)<sup>15</sup>—and then to the members of a select lineage that provisionally ended with Akbar the Great in the eighth generation.<sup>16</sup> In other words, genealogy was here used in

15. For a more general analysis of the handling of this episode by Akbarid chroniclers, see Habib 1997: 301–303.

16. Traces of such an impregnation of genealogy by the new illuminationist ideology may also be found in the *Tārīkh-i alfī* (*History of a Millennium*) of 1591–92, a chronicle commissioned

support of the exceptional status now claimed by the emperor and, consequently, of his divine right to rule. If, then, genealogy could at times become a handmaid at the hands of Mughal ideologues eager for innovation, it was not the kind of servant a good family could do without. A further confirmation of this may be found in some of the *Akbar Nāma*'s illustrations: in the 1596 copy of the chronicle, two opening paintings depicted within a short interval the festivities at the birth of Tīmūr and Akbar's own birth, thereby underlining the strong connection between the two rulers (Beach, Koch and Thackston 1997: 159–60).

To conclude on Akbar, it must be added that it was probably towards the end of his reign that dynastic iconography ceased to be exclusively conveyed through the illustration of genealogical narratives (as was the case with the *Tīmūr* and the *Chingīz Nāmas*) and became the subject of independent and self-sufficient images. The earliest work belonging to this category is an illustrated Tīmūrid-Mughal genealogy, probably executed by the artist Dhanrāj around 1600. Unfortunately, only fragments of it have survived to this day, but it may be assumed that its original form was that of a scroll with Tīmūr situated at the top, followed by his descendants through Mīrān Shāh down to the Mughals, each depicted within a circle. Such an initial arrangement clearly points to the early Tīmūrid pictorial genealogies mentioned in the introduction as a main source of inspiration. It was, however, considerably altered in the 1620s when the band centred on Mīrān Shāh was moved to the lower panel of a new composition now focusing on Jahāngīr and his sons (Figure 6; Welch and Welch 1982: 213–15; Canby 1998: 145–47). Shāh Jahān's removal from the scroll—the prince, who was originally probably depicted right under Jahāngīr's portrait, had raised the standard of revolt against his father in 1622—opportunistically reminds us of the biased nature of genealogical materials which, more often than not, represented the family's past through the lens of its dominant section at a given moment, and only exceptionally constituted a neutral archive documenting its lineage. To close the subject of Mughal illustrated family trees, it should further be mentioned that the genre does not seem to have met in India with the same success it achieved in the Ottoman empire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Necipoğlu 2000), as only three other works of this type—respectively centred on Akbar, Shāh Jahān and Bahādur Shāh (r. 1837–58)—have been traced (Kühnel 1941; Kurz 1967: 257–58; Balabanlılar 2007: 79).

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by Akbar in 1581–82 to celebrate the completion of the first Islamic millennium (the latter providing yet another framework for the assessment of the Mughal emperor's achievements). For example, in this work Bābur's grandfather Abū Sa'īd is said to have been blessed with 'the signs of kingship and the lights of divine favour [*anwār-i 'ināyat-i ilāhī*]' (Dawud 1999–2000: 96). My thanks go to A. AnooShahr for pointing out this passage to me.

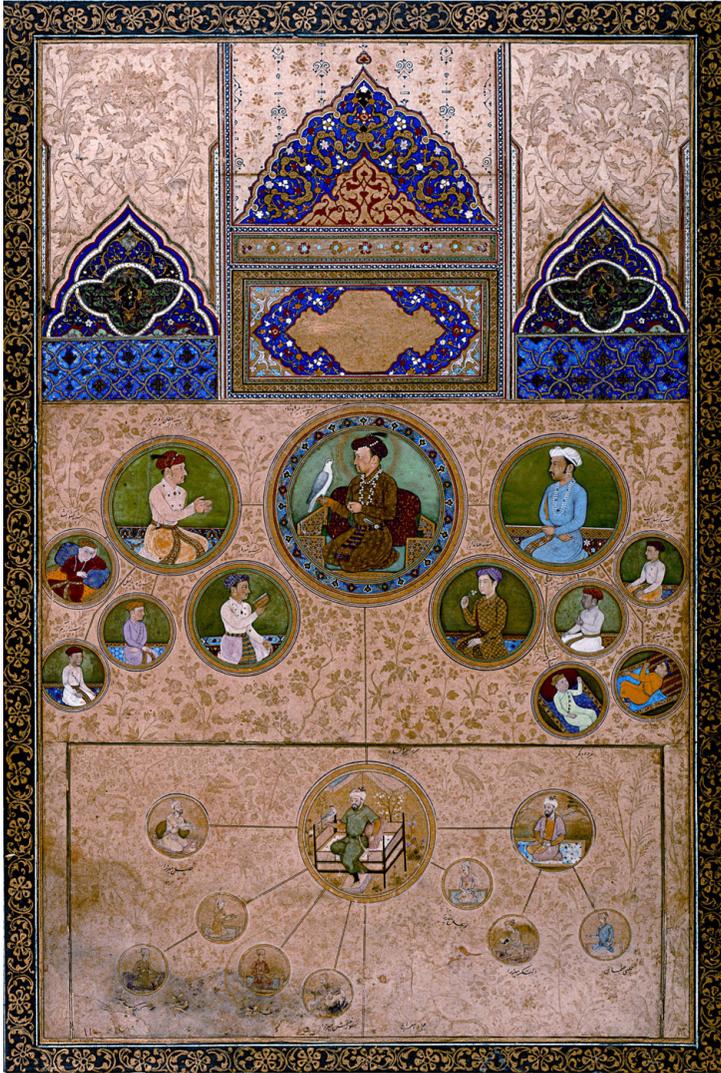


Figure 6. Pictorial genealogy of Jahāngīr (c. 1600 with additions of c. 1623–27).  
 Courtesy of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Geneva. AKM00151.

Dynastic iconography is a good entry point into the more general question of Jahāngīr's relationship to his own genealogy, for he proved particularly innovative and eclectic in this domain. In a spirit very similar to the one that had presided over the transformations of Dhanraj's scroll, Jahāngīr decided in the 1620s to refurbish one of the few paintings executed for his grandfather Humāyūn and to make a grandiose dynastic portrait out of it (Figure 7). Originally depicting a garden party held by Humāyūn on the eve of the reconquest of

India (1555), the painting was given an entirely new meaning with the addition of portraits of Mīrān Shāh and his descendants down to Jahāngīr, who may be seen seated in the central pavilion in the company of Humāyūn, Akbar and Shāh Jahān (Canby 1994). In collapsing historical time and bringing together royal ancestors in an imaginary family reunion (Necipoğlu 2000: 59), the artists of Jahāngīr's atelier certainly succeeded in creating a most powerful and vivid evocation of the transmission of Tīmūrid power from one generation to another.



Figure 7. *Princes of the House of Tīmūr, aka Humāyūn's Garden Party* (c. 1550–55 and c. 1620). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London. ME OA 1913.2–8.01AN34205001.

The emperor's eagerness to promote his prestigious lineage was not, however, limited to the transformation of older paintings. It also translated into the production of a series of new images very much inspired by the allegorical mode he is known to have introduced in the Mughal atelier. Dated *circa* 1614, *Jahāngīr Looking at a Portrait of his Father Akbar* (Figure 8) is probably one of the most interesting examples of such paintings because, beyond the explicit representation of Jahāngīr as the legitimate heir of Akbar, there seems to be a more subtle message to be read through Akbar's symbolic posture in the hands of his son and in the latter's larger stature and size—that is, the claim made by Jahāngīr to a status equal, if not superior, to that of his father. As in the memoirs of the emperor (on which more below), the exceptional charisma of the

father is here astutely put at the service of his son's ambitions.<sup>17</sup> Last but not least, it is also during the first quarter of the seventeenth century that dynastic quotations started invading paintings that were not, on the whole, genealogical in nature. Such quotations consisted of different versions of the Mughal genealogical seal, which were generally included in the allegorical portraits of the emperor, where they appeared under different guises. In the well-known *Jahāngīr Shooting at the Head of Malik 'Ambar* (Figure 9), a perfectly accurately depicted seal surmounted by a Westernizing crown is to be seen on the top of a pole.<sup>18</sup> Whatever forms the artists gave them, the function of these dynastic paraphernalia remained unchanged: they were an endless statement of the Mughals' legitimacy to rule, based on their Tīmūrid origins.

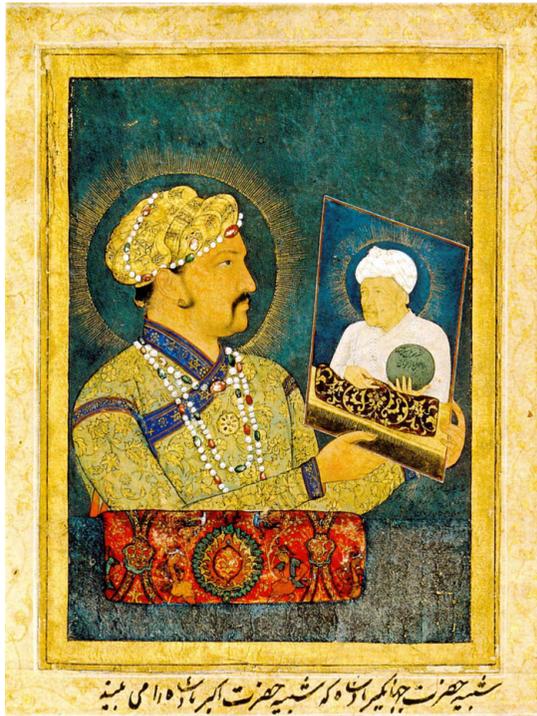


Figure 8. *Jahāngīr Looking at a Portrait of his Father Akbar*, by Abū'l Ḥasan and Hāshim (c. 1614). Courtesy of the Musée des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris. No. 3676B.

17. For other genealogical paintings commissioned by Jahāngīr, see: *Emperor Bābur with Attendants in a Garden Pavilion*, c. 1605, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (F1954.27); *The Emperor Humāyūn Enthroned*, 1610, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (F1939.48b); *Akbar in Old Age Attended by Prince Salīm*, by Manōhar, c. 1615, Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS. Douce Or.a.1., f. 18b), reproduced in Topsfield 2008: no. 25.
18. For a systematic and detailed analysis of genealogical quotations in Jahāngīr's and Shāh Jahān's allegorical portraits, see Gallop 1999: 98–102.



Figure 9. *Jahāngīr Shooting at the Head of Malik 'Ambar*, copy of a work by Abū'l Ḥasan (nineteenth century).

Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. F48.19a.

Even though dynastic iconography is a sphere in which Jahāngīr proved tremendously inventive, it is nevertheless in the textual materials of his time that the complexities of his genealogical discourse and the hierarchical principles underlying it reveal themselves most clearly. Besides commissioning an abridgement of Yazdī's *Ẓafar Nāma*,<sup>19</sup> he peppered the histories of his own reign—which

19. Entitled *Guzida-i Ẓafar Nāma* (British Library, Add. 16685), the new version was completed in 1615 by 'Abd-us-Sattār Lāhaurī who, following royal instructions, removed Koranic verses,

he either wrote himself (the *Jahāngīr Nāma* or *Book of Jahāngīr*) or closely supervised (the *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* or [*Nocturnal*] *Assemblies of Jahāngīr*)—with countless references to his distant or closer forefathers. When taken together and carefully examined, these notes enable the reader to map out the emperor's genealogical strategies just as clearly as those of his predecessors.<sup>20</sup>

While the role of Chingīz Khān's legacy seems to have been limited to that of a legitimating relic occasionally used in times of political uncertainty (Thackston 1999: 32, 57–58, 61), the function assigned to the figure of Tīmūr was much more important. Most significantly, Jahāngīr used the latter's invasion of India to depict the Mughal presence in the region as the outcome, not of sheer conquest, but of a rightful recovery of the territories lost after Tīmūr's death (p. 324). That such a claim reappeared in the first quarter of the seventeenth century after several decades of absence in official historiography should be seen as a response to the new Tīmūrid connections drawn up by contemporary Safavid ideology (Szuppe 1997; Quinn 2000). References to Tīmūr were also used by Jahāngīr to legitimate the Mughals' claims to their erstwhile homeland of Transoxiana (Thackston 1999: 33, 68) and to emphasize their prestige *vis-à-vis* other Muslim dynasties, especially the Ottomans whose ruler Sulṭān Bāyazīd (r. 1389–1402) had been so famously defeated by the world-conqueror (Thackston 1999: 95; Naushahi and Nizami 2006: 277–78).

Jahāngīr's assertion of his Tīmūrid identity moreover manifested itself through the collection of dynastic memorabilia (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 320; Thackston 1999: 95–96, 319, 357) and the engraving of his name and those of his ancestors in places the latter had graced with their presence (pp. 76–77) or where they were buried (Smith 1994: 33–34). Finally, in much the same way as his predecessors and successors, Jahāngīr generously contributed to the maintenance of the Gur-i Amir (Tīmūr's mausoleum in Samarqand) and its staff (Thackston 1999: 357). Apart from official historiography, other sources attest to the importance the monarch attached to the Tīmūrid reference: these are, on the one hand, paintings and books sheltered in the imperial library<sup>21</sup> and, on the other hand, literary accounts produced outside India, such as the poet Muṭribī of Samarqand's recording of his conversations with the monarch (Foltz 1998: 22–23, 87). In the light of the above evidence, it is therefore clear—at least in the case of Jahāngīr—that the Tīmūrid legacy was of a territorial and cultural (even sentimental), rather than a strictly political, nature. Interestingly enough, Tīmūr was never associated with a political decision or action and, in this respect, it was Akbar who stood as the ultimate model.

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Hadith and whatever was written in Arabic from the original, in order to make its reading easier (Naushahi and Nizami 2006: xlv).

20. For an earlier assessment of the role of dynastic legacies in the *Jahāngīr Nāma*, see Lefèvre 2007: 466–69.

21. Following a tradition initiated by Bābur, Jahāngīr took a keen interest in collecting the manuscripts and paintings produced at the behest of his Tīmūrid ancestors (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 321).

Although references to Bābur and Humāyūn are not altogether absent from the histories of Jahāngīr's reign, they pertain to the mystic, literary, naturalist or bacchanalian traits of these rulers' characters, rather than to their statecraft (Thackston 1999: 76–77, 83, 133, 299; Naushahi and Nizami 2006: 16, 20–21, 39, 128). Akbar, in contrast, appears most of the time as a benign and inspiring shadow accompanying his successor in every step and sphere of his life, including the tricky business of kingship. However, rather than embarking on a minute analysis of the expressions of this influence,<sup>22</sup> it seems more interesting for the present argument to examine its significance more closely. Akbar's omnipresence in his son's imperial discourse calls for two remarks. First, it points to Akbar's promotion as a new role model against which the achievements of his successors would henceforth have to be assessed. In other words, Akbar provided the later Mughals with a renovated pole of dynastic legitimacy which, compared with Tīmūr, had the obvious advantage of being an autochthonous figure who could potentially appeal to a much wider range of subjects than his Central Asiatic ancestor. In the years following his death in 1605, Akbar's exceptional qualities as a ruler were acknowledged throughout Muslim Asia even by his erstwhile competitors. Yet, from a pan-Asian Muslim perspective, there is no denying that the prestige deriving from Tīmūrid descent remained a far superior asset. Second, and in contrast to the received wisdom according to which Jahāngīr was but a dull successor to Akbar, it should be remembered that it was Jahāngīr himself who was at the root of his father's omnipresence in the chronicles of his reign, and that he certainly knew how to profit from it. Indeed, his self-presentation as the dutiful heir of Akbar enabled him to capture (at least part of) his father's aura and legitimacy, thereby strengthening his own authority. Like his reference to Chingīz Khān and Tīmūr, Jahāngīr's reference to Akbar is thus highly instrumental.

When dealing with the genealogy of the Mughals, historians naturally tend to emphasize—as I have done so far—their Chingīzid and Tīmūrid descent, and generally give short shrift to another aspect of their lineage that came to the fore with Jahāngīr's accession to the throne. I refer here to the matrimonial alliances made by the Mughals with a series of Rājput potentates from the early 1560s to the middle 1710s. While the impetus behind such marriages and their impact on the political landscape of early modern Hindustan have been addressed from both the Mughal and Rājput points of view (see e.g. Chandra 1993; Taft 1994), little attention has been paid to the reception and perceptions of these alliances by contemporaries, especially by members of the Mughal and—to a lesser extent—Rājput ruling families.

22. For such an analysis based on the *Jahāngīr Nāma*, see Lefèvre 2007: 468–69. My earlier conclusions are at once confirmed and enriched by a close reading of the *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī*, where Jahāngīr's eagerness to follow in his father's footsteps appears still more encompassing and sometimes seems to border on pathological obsession. See e.g. Naushahi and Nizami 2006: 45 and 91–92 for two episodes showing Jahāngīr's intense dislike of being caught out on his knowledge of Akbar's life.

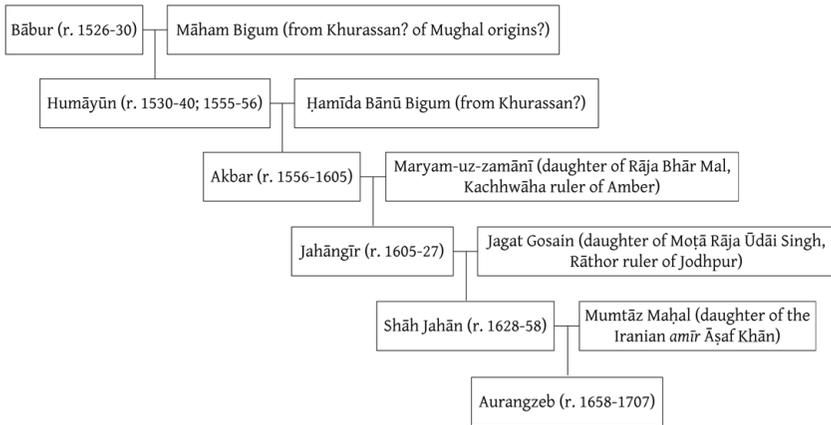


Figure 10. Mughal emperors and their mothers down to Aurangzeb.

How, for instance, did Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān handle the fact that they were, at least by modern-day biological standards, respectively 50 and 75% Rājput (Figure 10)? How, if at all, was this Rājput ancestry included within the Mughals' classical presentation of their lineage? Conversely, how was the alliance with the Mughals dealt with in the literature (especially in the genealogical works that became so popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries)<sup>23</sup> sponsored by, say, the Kachhwāhas of Amber or the Rāthors of Jodhpur, the two clans to which the mothers of Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān belonged? When considering the imperial discourse produced by Jahāngīr in this light, two things immediately command attention. The first is that the matrimonial alliances concluded with the Rājputs are not entirely passed over in silence by the emperor, as shown for instance by the following passage of the memoirs:

Rājā Mān Singh, one of my father's trusted and important *amīrs*, had various relationships and kinships [*nisbathā wa waṣlathā*] to this glorious family. Since he was constantly in my father's house, I myself proposed marriage with his sister [Shāh Bigum (d. 1605)], who gave birth to *Khusrau* and his sister *Sulṭān-un-nisā Bigum*,

23. Although the limited scope of the present paper does not allow any detailed discussion of the renewed importance given to genealogy by the Rājputs in early modern times, its connection with the advent of Mughal domination has to be underlined. The Rājputs' increased emphasis on their ancestry arose, at least in part, from the competition between various clans for political leadership in the new empire (Talbot 2009: 217); and the Mughals' insistence on their ancestry in the massive historical production they commissioned undoubtedly impacted upon the genres and media favoured by the Rājputs to give voice to their own genealogical claims, as has been shown also to be the case with the Afghan warlords of the empire (Green 2008). Although the subject needs further investigation, it is particularly tempting to see in the illustrated genealogical scrolls produced in eighteenth-century Mewar (Talbot 2007) an adaptation of earlier Timūrid-Mughal models.

my first child. His father was named Rāja Bhagwān Dās, and his grandfather was named Rāja Bhār Mal. The first of the Kachhwāha Rājput̃s who had the honor to serve my father was Rāja Bhār Mal. In correctness, allegiance and courage he was truly outstanding among his people.

(trans. Thackston 1999: 29; cf. Hashim 1980: 10)

Outwardly, these lines may be deemed a fair tribute paid by the Mughals to their Kachhwāha allies. Yet there is a crucial element missing here: the fact that Rāja Bhār Mal was Jahāngīr's grandfather on the maternal side. This sheer biological reality nowhere finds mention in the memoirs, where the monarch's mother is systematically referred to by her title of 'Maryam-uz-zamānī' (the Mary of the Age), without further details. Which leads us to a second important point: if the Mughals' family connections with the Rājput̃s were actually acknowledged, albeit reluctantly and in a distorted way, they were never something the dynasty thought fit to publicize, in any of the media they used for imperial propaganda, as something they could derive prestige or legitimacy from. Throughout Mughal domination over India, Tīmūrid descent remained the one and only genealogy relentlessly claimed in official chronicles, paintings, buildings, coins and seals. Whether or not the Mughals took advantage of their kinship with some Rājput̃ clans in their negotiations with others is unfortunately not a question on which the extant materials shed much light. The situation was not, however, radically different on the Rājput̃ side. Although our knowledge of the works composed in Sanskrit and in regional vernaculars (Brajbhāṣā, Mārwarī, etc.) at contemporary Rājput̃ courts is still largely fragmentary in nature, the forays that have been made by a handful of scholars into this understudied corpus provide us with a first glimpse into the Rājput̃s' view of their alliance with the Mughals (Ziegler 2000; Busch 2005; Talbot forthcoming). One such glimpse comes from the *Māncarīt*, a late sixteenth-century Braj biography of Rāja Mān Singh, the aforementioned Rājput̃ general and statesman of Akbar and Jahāngīr's times. While Narottam Kavi, the author of the *Māncarīt*, apparently had no qualms about including a short *vamśāvalī* (genealogy) of the Mughals up to Bābur, his poem bears no trace of any of the marriages that the women of Mān Singh's family (including his sister) had been making with the Delhi emperor and his sons since the days of his own grandfather.<sup>24</sup> On the Rājput̃ side too, then, kinship with the Mughals seems to have been a reality that nobody was keen on dwelling upon or even mentioning. Things were probably different, however, in the context of the Mughal court, where such a connection meant access to higher ranks and offices.

To come back to the Mughal aspect of the question, what has been said about the representation of the Mughal–Rājput̃ alliance in the Indo-Persian

24. Personal communication from Allison Busch, whom I warmly thank for having shared with me her work in progress on the *Māncarīt*.

chronicles of Jahāngīr's time equally holds true for the literature sponsored by Shāh Jahān, the most Indian of all of the Mughal emperors: even though the Rājput identity of Jagat Gosain does find mention in the impressive series of *Bādshāh Nāmas* commissioned by Jahāngīr's son Shāh Jahān (see e.g. Begley and Desai 1990: 4), this particular line of descent is not elaborated upon. On the other hand, Shāh Jahān is known for having emphasized the dynasty's Tīmūrid connections to an even greater degree than his predecessors. The first and best-known evidence of this is the adoption upon his accession to the throne of the lofty title of *ṣāhib-i qirān-i sānī*, meaning 'the second lord of the auspicious conjunction' and referring to Tīmūr's own title of *ṣāhib-i qirān*. Even though Akbar and Jahāngīr had sporadically assumed such an epithet, Shāh Jahān's systematic use of it right from the beginning of his reign clearly proclaimed his ambitions to rule as a second Tīmūr. The new emperor also took particular pride in the fact that he was the tenth monarch in descent from his prestigious ancestor: the number ten therefore acquired a marked symbolic meaning in his eyes, as shown for instance by the division into decades of the chronicles he commissioned (Begley and Desai 1990: xvii).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, Tīmūr's presence in these chronicles as a tutelary royal figure was particularly strong.<sup>26</sup> As a matter of fact, and in consonance with the historiographical model laid down by Abū'l Faḥl's *Akbar Nāma*, both Qazwīnī and Lāhaurī opened their official histories with accounts of Shāh Jahān's birth and lineage which presented three interesting common features. First, they did not trace the emperor's descent up to Chingīz Khān or the mythic Ālanqū'ā but started with Tīmūr—an assertion whose visual translation is to be found in the facing portraits of Shāh Jahān and Tīmūr which opened the master illustrated copy of Lāhaurī's chronicle (Beach, Koch and Thackston 1997: 26–27, 159–60). Second, a strong hierarchy informed the presentation of Shāh Jahān's ancestors: according to Lāhaurī, only three members of the lineage (Tīmūr, Bābur and Akbar) actually achieved true greatness (*ʿāzamat*), Humāyūn and Jahāngīr being thereby excluded from the new imperial model (Ahmad and 'Abd-ur-Rahim 1983, 1.1: 68). Third and last, we again find here the idea that Tīmūr's Indian campaign legitimately entitled the Mughals to the domination of India: while such a claim remained implicit in Jahāngīr's memoirs, Qazwīnī's statement is straightforward.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to his expected presence in the inaugural genealogy of the *Bādshāh Nāmas*, Tīmūr resurfaces later in the work of Lāhaurī in connection with the successive imperial campaigns directed to the west and north-west

25. Shāh Jahān also commissioned a massive work of astronomy significantly entitled *Kārnāma-i ṣāhib-i qirān-i sānī* (*The Grand Accomplishments of the Second Lord of [the Auspicious] Conjunction*), whose preface suggested 'a deep ontological equivalence between the two men [Shāh Jahān and Tīmūr]' (Moin 2010: 32).

26. The following analysis is greatly indebted to Habib 1997: 303–305.

27. British Library, Ms. Or. 173, f. 32a–33a, as cited by Habib 1997: 303–304.

of the empire from the late 1630s to the mid-1650s. Although the strategic fortress of Qandahar and then Badakhshan and the city of Balkh were the official targets of these expeditions,<sup>28</sup> Shāh Jahān's true goal was to regain control of all the territories lost by his Tīmūrīd ancestors to the Uzbek and Safavid powers during the sixteenth century. In this context, the usefulness of a reference to Tīmūr as the erstwhile ruler of Khurassan, Transoxiana and Badakhshan was self-evident. Lāhaurī thus presented the capture of Qandahar in 1638 as the first step in the rightful recovery of Tīmūr's former possessions; likewise, the 1646 conquest of Balkh and Badakhshan was supposed to open the way to the long-awaited reconquest of the dynasty's ancestral capital of Samarqand (Ahmad and 'Abd-ur-Rahim 1983, 2: 62, 482; Habib 1997: 304). While Shāh Jahān's territorial ambitions explain to a large extent the new emphasis he put on the figure of Tīmūr, the latter is also to be understood in light of the ideological competition between Safavids and Mughals: as in the case of Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān's stress on his direct descent from Tīmūr aimed at ridiculing the new Tīmūrīd connections that had been drawn up by contemporary Safavid historiography on spiritual rather than biological bases.

Apart from the *Bādshāh Nāmas*, there are other signs pointing to Shāh Jahān's special fondness for Tīmūr and, more particularly, for the historical sources expounding his achievements. We know, for instance, from an autograph note he appended to the manuscript of the *Tārīkh-i Khāndān-i Tīmūriyya*, that he took a deep interest in the dynastic history that his grandfather Akbar had commissioned and had illustrated in the mid-1580s.<sup>29</sup> Another piece of evidence comes from his reaction to the appearance of a text that purported to be nothing less than Tīmūr's own autobiography. According to Qazwīnī and Lāhaurī, in 1637 Shāh Jahān was offered a work entitled *Wāqī'āt-i Tīmūrī* (*Memoirs of Tīmūr*) by one of his courtiers named Abū Ṭālib Turbatī. The latter had discovered a Turkī copy of the text in the library of the Ottoman governor of Yemen, and had afterwards decided to translate it into Persian and give it as a gift to Shāh Jahān. Even though the emperor was aware that the *Wāqī'āt* had probably not been written by the world-conqueror himself but rather by one of his companions, he was nonetheless delighted with the present and, because the text contained the advice given by Tīmūr to his grandson Mīrẓā Pīr Muḥammad on the occasion of the latter's promotion to the governorship of Kabul, he thought fit to send a copy of the work to his own son Aurangzeb who, for his part, was on his way to a new assignment in the Deccan. In both Qazwīnī and Lāhaurī's

28. Qandahar became a Mughal possession once again between 1638 and 1653; as for Badakhshan and Balkh, they were only briefly occupied by the imperial army in 1646–47.

29. The note reads: 'This history, containing the account of Tīmūr and his descendants and of Akbar down to the twenty-second year of his reign, was composed in the time of "Shāh Bābā" [i.e. Akbar]' (Muqtadir 1977: 40).

*Bādshāh Nāmas*, the recording of this event is moreover followed by Tīmūr's first-person account of the advice he gave to Pīr Muḥammad.<sup>30</sup> That Shāh Jahān was not, however, entirely satisfied with Abū Ṭālib's translation is indicated by the existence of a second and more polished translation of the original Turkī by one Muḥammad Afzal Bukhārī. In the preface to the new version, the latter actually states that he was asked by the monarch to improve Abū Ṭālib's work by taking Yazdī's fifteenth-century *Ẓafar Nāma* as a model (Habib 1997: 306). As vividly shown by the *Wāqī'āt-i Tīmūrī*'s reception, refurbishment, and political use at the Mughal court, Shāh Jahān's claim to be a 'second lord of the auspicious conjunction' did not merely amount to the adoption of a bombastic title; it was but one of the expressions of his willingness to live up to Tīmūr's standard.

Last but not least, the emperor's marked cultivation of his Tīmūrid genealogy left a lasting imprint on official painting. Under his impulse, dynastic iconography established itself as one of the major genres of the imperial atelier, and simultaneously achieved a canonical and static character. In contrast to his father Jahāngīr who had explored several possibilities in this domain, Shāh Jahān systematically favoured a timeless and allegorical mode to depict the most illustrious members of his lineage—for which the aforementioned *Princes of the House of Tīmūr* certainly served as a model (Figure 7, p. 423 above). Initial exploration of published Shāh Jahānī paintings has allowed me to trace twenty such paintings (against four during Jahāngīr's reign), and there are probably more. While every representation was endowed with the same iconic quality, some variations are nevertheless perceptible within the genre. The closest to the 'Ur-image' of the *Princes of the House of Tīmūr* were those paintings depicting Tīmūr in the company of all his Mughal descendants down to Jahāngīr (e.g. Figure 11). Single or double pages bringing two or more members of the dynasty face to face (alone or in company of their ministers) seem, however, to have been the preferred graphic arrangement (e.g. Figure 12).<sup>31</sup>

Such compositions at times reflected the same hierarchical principles we have already seen at work in official chronicles. Such is for example the case with a double page from the *Minto Album* representing *Tīmūr Handing the Crown to Bābur in the Presence of Humāyūn* on the left (Figure 13), and *Akbar Handing*

30. British Library, Ms. Or. 173, f. 417b–419a, as cited by Habib 1997: 305–306; Ahmad and 'Abd-ur-Rahim 1983, 1.2: 288–92.

31. For other dynastic single pages, see: *Jahāngīr and his Father Akbar*, by Bālchand, c. 1630, *Kevorian Album*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (MMA 55.121.10.19v), reproduced in Welch et al. 1987: no. 11; *Akbar and Shāh Jahān*, c. 1645, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Musée des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris (Inv. MA3543), reproduced in Wright 2008: fig. 62; *Bābur and Humāyūn*, c. 1650, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (S1986.401), reproduced in Wright 2008: fig. 63; *Akbar Giving a Sarpech to Jahāngīr*, c. 1650, Art and History Trust Collection, Houston (AHC LTS2002.2.3), reproduced in Soudavar 1992: no. 129a.

the Crown to Shāh Jahān in the Presence of Jahāngīr on the right (reproduced in Wright 2008: no. 54). Just as in Lāhaurī's *Bādshāh Nāma*, the lineage evoked here passes from Tīmūr directly down to Bābur, Akbar and Shāh Jahān; in such a configuration, the only thing left for Humāyūn and Jahāngīr was passively to watch the transmission of power.<sup>32</sup> Lastly, there were independent portraits of former emperors that were not meant to be viewed in pairs but as individualized expressions of the family's glory (e.g. Figure 14).<sup>33</sup> Once executed, these dynastic paintings were pasted into imperial scrapbooks or *muraqqa*'s which probably were to Shāh Jahān and his successors what modern-day family picture albums are to us. They were also obviously more than that: they were documents of credence to be shown to the ambassadors of rival powers or to the newly selected members of the Mughal nobility. In this perspective, they functioned in very much the same way as the royal portraits that adorned the walls of imperial palaces, hunting pavilions and mausoleums. Unfortunately, almost nothing is left of Mughal wall-decorations apart from a few literary descriptions<sup>34</sup> and iconographic representations: in *Jahāngīr Receiving Prince Khurram on his Return from the Mewar Campaign* (c. 1635), a painting commissioned to illustrate the master copy of Lāhaurī's *Bādshāh Nāma* (and reproduced in Beach, Koch and Thackston 1997: no. 5), a portrait of Akbar is to be seen just above the throne of his son Jahāngīr.

32. For other dynastic double-pages, see: *Shāh Jahān Riding with Dārā Shikūh* (left), by Govardhan, c. 1638, *Minto Album*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (IM.18–1925), and *Tīmūr Riding with a Servant* (right), by Govardhan, c. 1638, *Minto Album*, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Ms. 7, no. 3), both reproduced in Okada 1992: nos 220–21; *Jahāngīr with Courtiers* (left), c. 1650, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (S1986.407), and *Shāh Jahān Receiving Dārā Shikūh* (right), c. 1650, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (M.83.105.21), both reproduced in Wright 2008: figs 66–67; *The Elderly Shāh Jahān* (left), c. 1650, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (S1986.405), reproduced in Wright 2008: fig. 54, and *Jahāngīr in Old Age* (right), c. 1650, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, present location unknown, reproduced in Ettinghausen 1961: fig. 11; *An Equestrian Portrait of Akbar in Old Age* (left), c. 1650, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (In 07B.21), reproduced in Wright 2008: no. 55, and *An Equestrian Portrait of Shāh Jahān* (right), c. 1650, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Goenka Collection, reproduced in Goswamy 1999: no. 56.
33. For other individual portraits of genealogical significance, see: *Akbar with Lion and Calf*, by Govardhan, c. 1630, *Kevorkian Album*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (MMA 55.121.10.22v), reproduced in Welch *et al.* 1987: no. 9; *Bābur Seated in a Landscape*, by Payāg, c. 1640, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Musée des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris (7156), reproduced in Wright 2008: fig. 61; *Humāyūn Seated in a Landscape*, by Payāg, c. 1645, *Late Shāh Jahān Album*, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (S1986.400), reproduced in Okada 1992: no. 246.
34. See e.g. Foster 1999: 163 for the description by William Finch of the mural paintings representing Akbar and his sons in the Kala Burj of the Lahore fort; Thackston 1999: 341 for the family picture gallery that adorned the Hari Parbat fort near Srinagar.



Figure 11. *Tīmūr, his Mughal Descendants and the Poet Sa'di*, by Hāshim (c. 1650).  
 Courtesy of The British Library Board, London. *Johnson Album*, 64, no. 38.

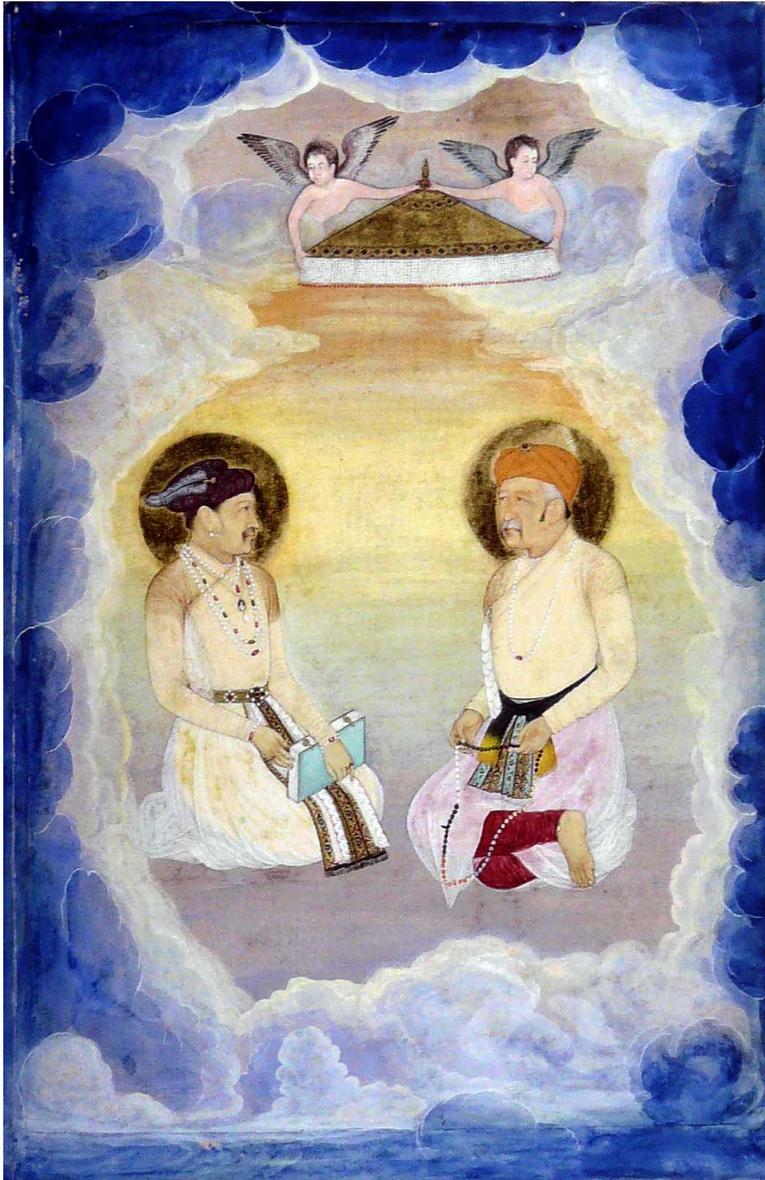


Figure 12. *Akbar and Jahāngīr in Apotheosis* (c. 1650).  
Courtesy of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. MS. Douce Or. a.1, f. 19a.

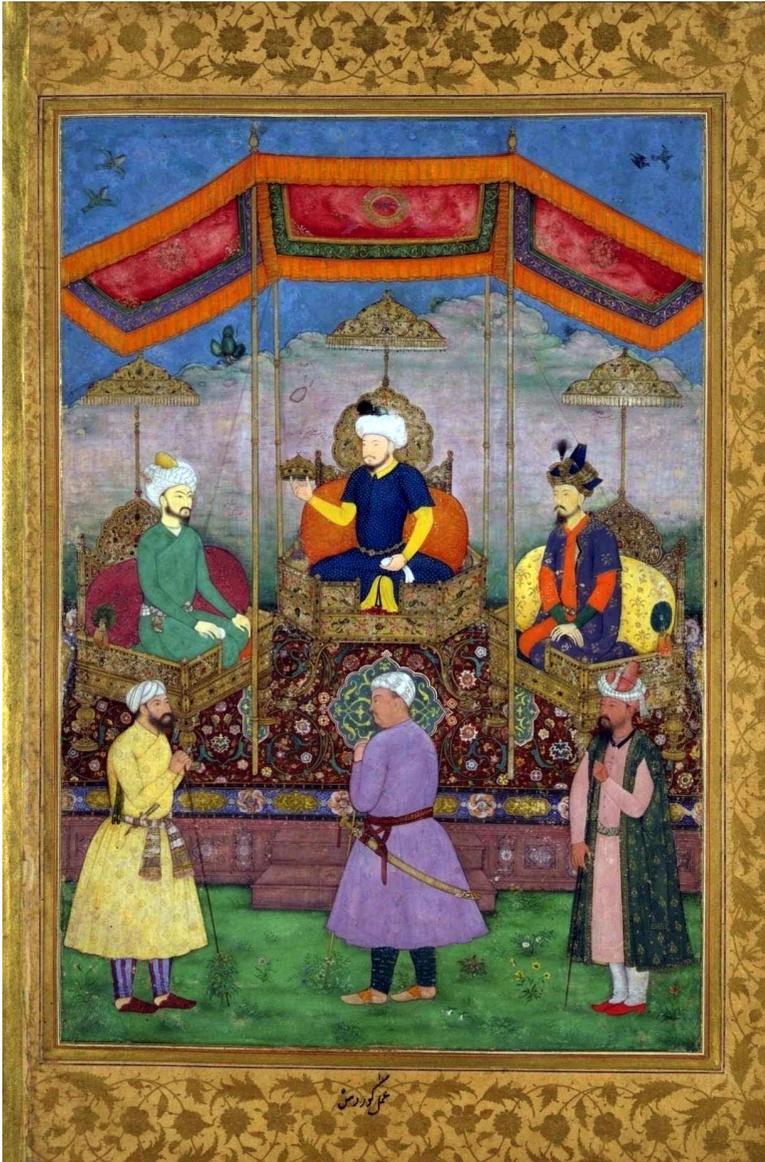


Figure 13. *Timūr Handing the Crown to Bābur in the Presence of Humāyūn*, by Govardhan (c. 1630). Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. *Minto Album*, IM 8-1925.



Figure 14. *Akbar in Old Age with a Sarpech* (c. 1650).

Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. S1986.402.

## CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, I would like to call attention to one last image, which was exhibited at the ‘Loan Exhibition of Antiquities’ held at the Delhi Museum of Archaeology on the occasion of King George V’s Coronation Durbar in 1911. Of undoubtedly late manufacture (early nineteenth century, according to Welch *et al.* 1987: 246), the work—composed of two paintings executed on the recto and verso of the same folio—is completely saturated with genealogical iconography (Gallop 1999: 102–103). At the centre of the composition on the recto (Figure 15) is a copy of *Jahāngīr Shooting at the Head of Malik ‘Ambar*

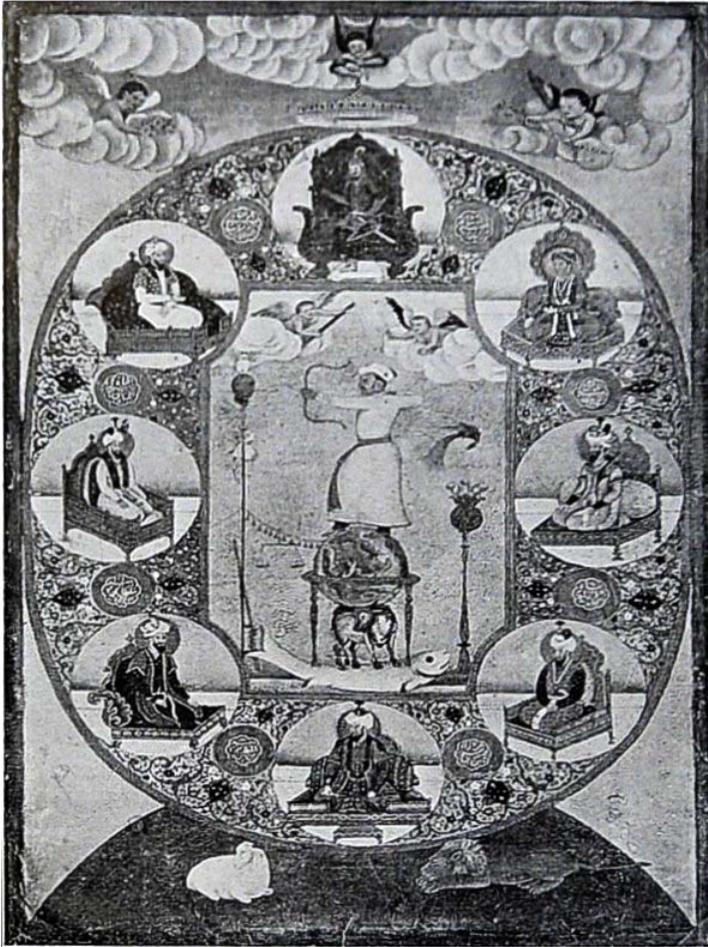


Figure 15. *Jahāngīr and his Ancestors* (late eighteenth or early nineteenth century) (Delhi Museum of Archaeology 1911: pl. 39a).

featuring the seal-standard to the right (cf. Figure 9, p. 425 above); framing it are eight portraits of Jahāngīr's ancestors up to Tīmūr to which are appended eight medallions containing their names, the whole constituting a grandiose visual translation of Jahāngīr's genealogical seal. Lastly, the seal motif is taken up yet again at the top of the painting, where a cherub is depicted holding a parasol adorned with smaller genealogical circles. It would be hard to find a more powerful evocation of the Mughals' deep attachment to their Tīmūrid origins. Together with the elements presented in the course of this paper, this painting gives clear evidence of the fact that Tīmūrid genealogy remained a central pivot of the dynasty's self-definition throughout its reign. It also testifies to the lasting popularity achieved by such a definition: even after the Mughals had lost power to the British, they were still remembered as descendants of the great Tīmūr, a fact that they would no doubt have appreciated, as it perfectly matched the dynastic memory they had themselves cultivated and relentlessly propagated.

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